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Dale Hollow Lake Water Levels

(NASHVILLE, TENN., Oct. 1, 2007) – Six straight months of below average rainfall, coupled with lake level restrictions at Lake Cumberland and Center Hill Lake, have placed the Cumberland River Basin in a severe hydrologic drought. The Cumberland River from Celina, Tenn., to Smithland, Ky., is dependent on the release of water stored in the upstream tributary projects to support a variety of needs including water supply, water quality, navigation, electric power production, and recreation. The system of reservoirs, 10 in all, was designed and built to operate collectively to meet these requirements. There simply will not be enough water to meet all the objectives. As a result, Corps of Engineers water managers have prioritized water uses to guide them on how to operate the system. The maintenance of a reliable water supply and preservation of acceptable water quality conditions will be the primary drivers for operation of the reservoir system.

This has caused water management officials with the Nashville District to maintain elevations in Dale Hollow Lake this year at levels not customarily seen by visitors. Early in the year those elevations were at a higher than usual elevation and then, later in the year, they have drawn levels down sooner than what visitors expected. These changes were necessary because of two factors.

The decision to maintain Lake Cumberland, Ky., at elevation 680, or 43 feet lower than normal, for the seepage rehabilitation project at Wolf Creek Dam, coupled with the drought conditions in the Cumberland River Basin have caused some changes in the water elevation at

To Better Serve The Public

Dale Hollow Lake. Lake Cumberland typically supplies water to the Cumberland River for a variety of authorized purposes and that storage capability has been lost during the rehabilitation project at Wolf Creek Dam. Water in Dale Hollow had to support some of those purposes in 2007.

Early visitors to Dale Hollow this year saw some high water on beaches, access ramps to courtesy floats were underwater, and some campsites and parking lots were even covered. Now quite the opposite is true, a situation made worse by the current drought which has seen Tennessee record nearly 15 fewer inches of annual rainfall for the year to date.

Given current conditions and projections, the Corps of Engineers may be forced to draw the lake to even lower levels this winter. Elevation 636, which is Dale Hollow's average low water elevation, is projected for the end of October.

Corps water managers will continue to evaluate the system, of which Dale Hollow is only one part, on a daily basis to make the best use of the available water.

Below are two questions that have been asked and they are reprinted here for the benefit of visitors. Specific questions, particularly about marinas, can be directed to the Resource Manager's office.

Questions and Answers

Q. What is the worst case scenario for water elevations at Dale Hollow? Might it go lower than 636?

A. If drought conditions persist, Dale Hollow lake levels could go lower than 636.

Q. Which boat launching ramps are currently not useable?

A. There are nine boat ramps that are currently not useable. Those are Cedar Hill (North), Sulphur Creek #1, Wolf River #1, Eagles Cove #1, Star Point #1, Star Point #2, East Port #1, Wolf River Bridge and Comptons Bottom. Since a 20-foot patrol boat equipped with a 200 hp outboard requires 2.8 feet of water to launch, most other ramps on Dale Hollow will not be useable at elevation 636. Only Dale Hollow State Park Ramp, Sunset and East Port #2 (on point)

would have enough water to launch a boat that large. Only very small craft might be launched at Obey (day use), Plankyard, Sulphur Creek #2, and Star Point #3 (old Hwy 53).

Location	Elevation at End of Concrete Ramp (msl)	**End of Concrete Depth at 636 msl (ft)
Pleasant Grove	633.62	2.38
Government Boat House	633.42	2.58
Willow Grove	634.42	1.58
Lillydale (day use)	634.42	1.58
Lillydale (campground)	634.12	1.88
Obey (day use)	633.42	2.58
Obey (Campground)	635.42	0.58
Cove Creek	634.42	1.58
Plankyard	633.42	2.58
Cedar Hill (North)		
Cedar Hill (South)	634.22	1.78
Dalle Hollow Marina	634.42	1.58
Holly Creek	633.72	2.28
Hendricks Creek	634.42	1.58
Sulphur Creek #1		
Sulphur Creek #2	633.42	2.58
Wisdom	633.92	2.08
Wolf River #1		
Wolf River #2 (campground)	634.42	1.58
Eagles Cove #1		
Eagles Cove #2 (new ramp)	633.92	2.08
Star Point #1		
Star Point #2		
Star Point #3 (old hwy 53)	633.42	2.58
Sunset	628.5	7.5
EastPort #1		
EastPort #2 (on point)	631.37	4.63
Willow Grove (marina)	634.12	1.88
Mitchell Creek	633.62	2.38
Horse Creek	633.72	2.28
Dale Hollow State Park	631.22	4.78
Wolf River Bridge		
Comptons Bottom		
RED indicates ramps that are unusable at 637.42 MSL		
** 20' Patrol Boat w'h 200 hp outboard required 2.8 ft of water to launch		